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**Indian Gambling:** Native American Indian Tribes have been allowed to hold legal gambling in many states for a long time. The original purpose of this was to give some economic activity to large numbers of full-blooded Indians living on reservations in remote areas with little economic opportunity. In many cases, such legal gambling has been successful in achieving the desired result.

However, now there is much abuse of this privilege. This abuse comes from the fact that there is absolutely huge money to be made from establishing one of these casinos, particularly if you can get it in or near an urban area. That gigantic profit opportunity comes from several factors. First of all, in most states, Indian casinos are a government-sanctioned monopoly, with little competition except from other Indian casinos. Secondly, they regulate themselves, by and large. So, unlike Nevada where the Nevada Gaming Commission (NGC) establishes and monitors minimum payouts, Indian casinos can pretty much pay out as little in winnings as they can get away with so their margins are much higher. And, of course, they are not subject to state regulations nor do they have to pay state income taxes. So let's see..... you get a monopoly protected from competition by law that has huge margins and is exempt from many regulations and taxes. Sounds like a heck of a nice gig, if you can get it.

And because of these attractions, lots of people are trying to get these gigs. There are over 300 new applications currently in the Bureau of Indian Affairs seeking tribal recognition. Many of these are in urban areas, or are sub-groups of other tribes. Often, like the "Juaneno" group in San Juan Capistrano, the application is from maybe half a dozen professional people tracing small fractions of Indian blood and financed by big law firms and gambling operators who will get a big share of the take. In other words, these are shams trying to cash in with an Indian casino. It's hard to even describe how far from the original intent of the law all of this is. But it's happening and it's a blatant abuse of the process. The affect of these casinos on the surrounding neighborhoods is not benign either. They bring crime and increases in spousal abuse and other problems associated with those who become addicted to readily available gambling.

The process must be changed. And I have introduced 2 bills to do that.

The first is HR 6087, which would sunset the federal recognition process permanently in 36 months. The government has been recognizing Indian tribes for 232 years. We have recognized nearly 600 of them so far, according to the Bureau of Indian Affairs. No one is creating any "new" Native American tribes. They either existed hundreds of years ago or they didn't. There are no impoverished Indians living on reservations around America that are not already part of a recognized tribe. The main (and in many cases only) reason that people seek new recognition is to establish casinos or by-pass taxes and regulation. If it hasn't been recognized in the last 232 years, it is almost certainly not worthy of recognition. There have been only 9 groups recognized in the last 58 years, most of which were recognized by Congressional Action. This bill would also keep existing tribes from putting more land "in trust" to move new casinos into urban areas.

The second is HR 5581, which would require that any tribe seeking to bring new land into trust or establish a new casino, notify all local governments in a 25 mile radius upon making their application. Since this is a federal process that takes place in Washington, many times people in the local community have no idea that such proposals are going on until it's too late. This bill would change that. People would then have the opportunity to express their displeasure (or happiness) with the casino or land use proposal while the process is still unfolding.

Neither of these should be partisan issues and I expect both Democrat and Republican cosponsors in this quest to reform an antiquated and much abused process. There are those on both sides of the aisle who support this because they think it's corrupt, or they just don't want to see gambling expanded or they don't like taxes and regulations avoided this way. Our neighborhoods will be the better for it.

**Trial Lawyer Tax Breaks:** The Democratic majority has routinely rejected every proposed tax reduction on Americans and they have steadfastly stuck to their insistence on repealing every tax reduction passed during this century. That will raise taxes on every single American who currently pays taxes and add some new ones to the tax rolls.

But there is one group that apparently is deserving of a tax cut, according to the majority. Contingent Fee Trial Lawyers. Yep, you heard me correctly. Buried in a recent tax increase bill (which I opposed and the president will likely veto) was a special tax break for trial lawyers paid under a contingent fee. It would allow them to deduct their expenses on a contingent fee case whenever they incur them rather than wait, as current law requires, until the case is concluded. This bill contained mainly tax increases on lots of other businesses. This was one of the few tax cuts in the bill.

Maybe this is to aid the struggling trial lawyer industry? After all, they are the engine of our economy aren't they? They employ so many people? Yeah right.

Is there any question what special interests rule the roost now?

Until next time, I remain respectfully,

Congressman John Campbell